

White House Expects Relations With Cannon's Panel to Improve

By JOHN D. MORRIS

WASHINGTON, May 12 — The Johnson Administration is looking forward to better relations with the powerful House Appropriations Committee under the chairmanship of Representative George H. Mahon.

Mr. Mahon, a Texas Democrat, will take over the chairmanship, possibly by the end of this week. He succeeds Representative Clarence Cannon, Democrat of Missouri, who died early today.

Administration leaders do not expect any sudden change in the 50-member committee's conservative inclinations and budget-cutting proclivities.

Mr. Mahon, like his predecessor, is a conservative and an outspoken advocate of economy in Government.

However, it is generally accepted that the 63-year-old Texan will be much easier to work with than was the crusty, 85-year-old Mr. Cannon.

"He couldn't be any harder to work with," one Administration man commented. "George at least will listen to reason."

Fewer Roadblocks Expected

Mr. Mahon's reputation for moderation and reasonableness encourages speculation that over the long run the Administration will encounter fewer frustrations in working for what it regards as adequate funds for foreign aid and some other programs.

A possible by-product of the shift in chairmans is a gradual decline in the power of Otto E. Passman, chairman of the foreign operations subcommittee. Mr. Passman, a Louisiana Democrat, has been a major force in the drastic reduction each year of foreign-aid funds sought by the Kennedy and Eisenhower Administrations.

Mr. Passman was encouraged, backed, prodded and sometimes led by Mr. Cannon. It is conceivable that without the Missourian's help, Mr. Passman will not be as successful in his assaults on the foreign-aid budget.

Unlike Mr. Cannon, Mr. Mahon has always supported the foreign-aid program, although he has often voted for reductions in its budget.

Declines to Comment

He declined to discuss committee business today on the ground that it would be inappropriate so soon after Mr. Cannon's death. His past record, however, indicates that he will not give Mr. Passman the type of backing his predecessor did. Mr. Cannon's death leaves a

vacuum that is unlikely to be filled in the House power structure.

His influence was almost entirely personal, stemming mainly from his ability to give or withhold favors to colleagues through his prerogatives as appropriations chairman, without regard to the wishes of his party's leadership.

Mr. Mahon is temperamentally and politically unsuited for such a role.

While Mr. Cannon invited controversy, Mr. Mahon seeks to avoid it. While Mr. Cannon's technique was keyed to the bold use of power, Mr. Mahon's is one of persuasion and compromise.

Finally, Mr. Mahon's attitude toward the House Democratic leadership and the White House are likely to encourage teamwork with the Appropriations Committee that was almost wholly lacking under the Cannon chairmanship.

On Cordial Terms

His relations with Speaker John W. McCormack of Massachusetts, though somewhat formal, are cordial. Although President Johnson is not one of his closest friends, the two Texans share each other's respect and have maintained a cordial relationship since they were colleagues together in the House.

Mr. Mahon plans to continue as chairman of the Appropriations subcommittee that handles the defense budget. His chairmanship of the full committee promises to buttress his already considerable influence in military affairs.

That influence will be further enhanced by the retirement from Congress at the end of this year of Carl Vinson, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee.

The Georgia Democrat and Mr. Mahon sometimes disagree on defense policy, notably with regard to unification of the armed force. Mr. Mahon favors a greater concentration of authority over the three services than Mr. Vinson does.

Mr. Mahon's succession to the Appropriations chairmanship is all but automatic under the seniority system. The House is expected to perform the formality of electing him to the post later this week or early next week.

Under the seniority system, the chairmanship goes to the member of the majority party who has served longest on a committee. Mr. Mahon has been on the Appropriations Committee since 1940.